

Doc. No. 10102

INTERROGATION OF

General Shunroku HATA

Date and Time: 14 January 1946, 1545-1700 hours

Place : Sugamo Prison, Tokyo, Japan

Present : General Shunroku HATA
Carlisle W. Higgins, Interrogator
Col. Thos. V. Morrow, Interrogator
Danis Kildoyle, Interpreter
Claire Farrell, Stenographer

Questions by: Mr. Higgins

Q. Tell the General that Colonel Morrow and Mr. Higgins of the International Prosecution Section are here and would like to talk to him if he is willing to answer questions and if it is all right with him.

A. He said yes.

Q. How old is the General?

A. He will be 67 in July.

Q. What military school, if he was a student at such, did the General attend?

A. He is a graduate of the Officers School, which is equivalent to West Point, and then of the Army Artillery and Engineering School; also the Army College (Staff College).

Q. What was his branch of the service?

A. He did not specialize in anything. His branch is artillery but he didn't specialize.

Q. When was he first commissioned as an officer in the Imperial Japanese Army?

A. In 1901 he became a Sub-Lieutenant.

Q. What military commands has the General held?

A. He became Commander of the 16th Field Artillery Regiment -- he doesn't remember the exact date. The year before the earthquake -- it would be 1922. In 1926 he became 4th Artillery Brigade Commander.

Q. What service did the General perform outside the Islands?

A. He was Commander of the Taiwan (Formosan) Army from 1936 to 1937. And Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Armies in central China in 1938.

Q. Did he assume command on the 17th of February 1938?

A. Yes. He became Commander-in-Chief of all the Expeditionary Armies in China.

Q. Did the General succeed General Iwane MATSUI?

A. He succeeded General MATSUI in central China. And when he became Commander-in-Chief for all the forces in China he succeeded General NISHIO.

Q. Where were General NISHIO's headquarters?

A. In Nanking.

Q. Where were MATSUI's headquarters?

A. First in Shanghai; then moved to Nanking.

Q. When did the General first go to China as a Commander?

A. In 1938.

Q. What command did he have at that time when he first went to continental China?

A. In August of 1937 he came back and became Inspector General of Military Education; in 1938 he went to China again. When the China Incident began he was in Formosa.

Q. Did he move his command with him from Formosa to China?

A. No, he came back here to Tokyo. They were two entirely different operations and he had come back to Tokyo to be Inspector General. It was a very small affair in China at this time.

Q. How many troops were under his command when he first went to China?

A. Five divisions under his command when he first went to China.

Q. Was that about 80,000 men?

A. He doesn't remember but he thinks it was a little more because there are other services attached to this - like supply services.

Q. Were those troops from the home islands of Japan or were they continentals made up of Formosan or Korean troops, or both?

A. They were all from Japan proper. The numbers of the Divisions he commanded are 3d, 6th, 9th, 12th Reserve Division, 18th Reserve Division; all from the main islands.

Q. Were those troops already in China when the General assumed command or were they transferred from the islands when he assumed command?

A. They had been under MATSUI and he took over.

Q. Does the General know why he was assigned to relieve MATSUI?

A. Yes, he said the object of General MATSUI's expeditionary forces had been achieved with the capture of Nanking and he was sent there with the principal object of pacifying the district that had been captured. His instructions were that Nanking -- that it was not advisable to leave the triangle comprised by Shanghai, Nanking and Foochow, and that he was to pacify this district -- and, if he found it necessary to leave this triangle, it would be advisable to obtain instructions from the Imperial General Headquarters.

Q. Did he ever receive instructions from the Imperial General Headquarters to leave the triangle?

A. No. He left this for Fangchow.

Q. Was that after instructions were given by the General Headquarters not to leave?

A. No, this instruction was received from the Imperial Headquarters to leave the triangle.

Q. What military mission was he assigned to perform in his orders to leave the triangle?

A. The capture of Fangchow was his objective and instructions.

Q. At the time he received these instructions what was the total number of troops under his command?

A. He said for this Fangchow operation an army was sent down from the North and this army comprised 4 or 5 divisions.

Q. Who was in command of the army?

A. It was under his command.

Q. What was the numerical strength of each of those forces that came down from the North?

A. He thinks about 300,000 or 400,000, although this is from memory. He is not certain.

Q. What Chinese Commandor-in-Chief opposed him in this move to capture Fangchow?

A. He thinks it must have been Chiang-Kai Shek himself.

Q. From the time he first initiated his move how long was it until Fangchow was captured?

A. Five months.

Q. What was the approximate number of his troops that were engaged in that operation, including his forces in the triangle and the armies that came down from the North?

A. In addition to these, later on, after this triangle had been emptied of the forces, two or three divisions arrived to take over this triangle so there would have been 11 or 12 divisions altogether in this sector.

Q. What was the available strength of each Division?

A. He thinks about 15,000 to 16,000 troops.

Q. Were these experienced troops or recruits?

A. Yes, they were experienced troops. Four Divisions had been recently mobilized but all the rest were seasoned troops.

Q. Of course the recently mobilized troops had had military training under the Japanese conscription laws?

A. Yes.

Q. Well, I'd like to have an estimate of the number of killed and wounded -- the battle casualties?

A. It is a matter of many years ago and he doesn't remember. This was a long time ago and he has no idea but he does remember figures after he became Commander-in-Chief of all the armies in China.

Q. How long did he serve as Commander-in-Chief?

A. Ten months, 1938 from February to November.

Q. What were the battle casualties of the Japanese armies under him during that period?

A. There is a little mistake. From February to November 1938 he was in central China and he became Commander-in-Chief in 1941 until 1944.

Q. What were the figures up until about November?

A. He does not remember those. He remembers figures in connection with 1941-4 but he has forgotten for the earlier period. For 1941-4 the dead numbered 50,000 in China.

Q. According to the usual ratio then, isn't it likely to assume that the wounded amounted to about 200,000?

A. He figures about 200,000. He mentioned a ratio of 1-5 -- the others died of illness -- but he doesn't remember figures.

Q. What was the date on which Hangchow was captured?

A. He thinks it was October 25, 1938.

Q. Does the General not have some definite idea as to his losses in that operation?

A. He could guess a figure but it would be just a figure taken at random.

Q. Can the General give me his estimate of what the Chinese losses were when from the time he left the triangle until Hankchow was captured?

A. No, he has no idea.

Q. How many Chinese troops did his army capture in this operation? How many prisoners were taken?

A. He doesn't think there were so many. He didn't worry about figures of prisoners taken there. He thinks many of them just turned tail and left the field of battle.

Q. Did he look upon this as a war in China or was it just a frontier incident?

A. Although it actually was a war all they ever considered it was as a China Incident. Actually it was a war.

Q. Did the General study international law in his Staff College?

A. Yes. In the War College.

Q. Did the General know that Japan had treaties in which they promised not to invade China and not to wage war against China -- like in 1922 and 1926?

A. What is this treaty called?

Q. The Nine-Power Treaty.

A. Yes, he knows it.

Q. Well, did he think that they were breaking that treaty or not?

A. He knows of the existence of this treaty but he does not know the terms and there seems to be no other way out but to resort to armed force when other means fail.

Q. But suspending the treaty says they are not to resort to armed force until they have made a try for peace?

A. He is not well acquainted with the Nine-Power Treaty. He merely knows of its existence.

Questions by: Mr. Higgins

Q. What position, if any, did the General have with the Japanese Army at the time of surrender?

A. Commander-in-Chief of the 2d General Army.

Q. Where was its headquarters?

A. Hiroshima. He was there at the time of the atomic bomb raid. His head is not right yet.

Q. Where did the General leave the army records when he left the China theatre?

A. These were all left in China.

Q. At the time the General's troops were in possession of the triangle were not the civil laws supplanted and he, as commander, governed by Japanese military law, and did this not apply not only to his troops but to the civil population?

A. Generally, he said, the law was left in the hands of the Chinese.

Q. What does he mean generally?

A. Anything that would not concern military matters.